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**India and the United States:  
Building a Strategic Partnership**

**by**

**Kent Allen Breedlove, M.D.S., B.S.**

**Thesis**

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The University of Texas at Austin  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

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**The University of Texas at Austin  
December 2001**

**India and the United States:  
Building a Strategic Partnership**

**Approved by  
Supervising Committee:**

Sumit Ganguly  
Mark J. Zareman

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December 2001

## **Abstract**

# **India and the United States: Building a Strategic Partnership**

Kent Allen Breedlove, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2001

Supervisor: Sumit Ganguly

The history of relations between the United States and India is replete with misperceptions and missed opportunities. Yet, both nations have several common areas of interest, strategic goals, and even economic aspirations. Lately, Washington and New Delhi are improving relations and current events are pushing them together in a common cause. Does this new environment present a unique opportunity to finally align both of these countries? This thesis argues an opportunity is presenting itself that could establish both great democracies as partners in the global community.

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## **Chapter 1: Relations of the United States and India**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The relationship between the United States and India has always been problematic. Relations between the two countries are strangely difficult to describe, despite their shared colonial past with Great Britain, and despite the frequent lauding of politicians, pundits and academics that the United States and India are the oldest and biggest democracies. In the latter half of the twentieth century there was an enormous influx of Indian immigrants in the fields of academics, medicine, business, and computer science. Yet diplomatic and economic relations remained strained. It is also difficult to understand how India's strategic location between two regions vital to the United States - the Persian Gulf and East Asia - has not compelled either country to engage one another more conciliatorily.

After the Cold War in 1991, India began an economic reform that appeared very promising to the United States and its business interests. The second Clinton administration took notice of this change and charted a deliberate course to improve relations with India. This policy abruptly ended with India's nuclear weapons test in May 1998. Followed by Pakistan's own tests, South Asia suddenly became, in the eyes of the administration, a potential nuclear flash point. The dynamics of the Indo-United States relationship changed course and nuclear non-proliferation was the new focal point of American diplomacy in India.

Nuclear tests aside, news reports spoke of the visit of former President Clinton to India last year as a turning point in Indo-United States relationships, this on the heels of overt United States support for India during the 1999 war with Pakistan in Kargil. The perception of this change was valid, however in reality, very little did change in how the administration dealt with India. For example, the United States was still pressuring India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and roll back its nuclear weapons program to an ambiguous, non-developed state. The Clinton administration attempted to use economic sanctions and public political exhortations to persuade India to sign. These tactics demonstrated how United States policy makers' lacked a coherent assessment of India's security requirements, an overall misunderstanding of India's changing strategic environment, and the inability to recognize the resolve behind New Delhi's tests.

Beginning in January 2001, the new Bush administration continued to build upon the goodwill established by the Clinton visit to India. Constructive rhetoric, promises, and several bilateral visits took place. Although the present warm feelings shared by both countries is not new, these positive and productive relations are historically short-lived. Why have these two nations had such a difficult relationship? As the current war on terrorism changes the dynamics of the international community, how will this impact on the United States and India? Do the United States and India possess divergent concerns in the international community, or growing common interests?

Perhaps the answers are not as simple as the questions. Still, there are many factors as to why an unclear future should not inhibit strengthening current ties between both nations. The purpose of this paper is to argue why the United States should make India a strategic partner. In discussing the benefits of changing the two countries' relationship and the impact on their present strategies, some policy recommendations are presented. The partnership concept, on the other hand, is not a policy goal. The idea of a strategic partnership is defined as a continuous process of diplomatic engagement, economic and trade collaboration, military cooperation, and mutual support or understanding in security matters.

The remainder of this chapter is an abridged history of Indo-United States relations. The purpose is to establish some institutional knowledge on this relationship to form a basis for future policies. Chapter two outlines India's changing strategic outlook and its growing role in international affairs. Chapter three describes the United States' changing strategic outlook and its impact on India. Chapter four explains the diplomatic, economic and military benefits of a partnership between India and the United States. Finally, Chapter five lists some policy suggestions and concludes the argument.

## **HISTORY OF RELATIONS**

The end of the Second World War saw a dramatic paradigm shift in international affairs. It resulted in the end of the British Empire, the emergence of the United States as a superpower, and the creation of dozens of new nation-states in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. It also resulted in the Cold War competition

between the United States and the Soviet Union that shaped how these two nations interacted with allies, friends, and other nations.

During the Cold War, relationships between India and the United States could best be described by their differences rather than their similarities. The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was the main architect of Indian domestic and international policies. Nehru possessed an enormous amount of enthusiasm for India's moral leadership in Asia and Africa, in particular former British colonies. Accordingly, much of this enthusiasm and morality was counter to interests and concerns of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Initial Steps (1947-1954)**

The first years of the Cold War presented the United States with several critical challenges. It saw the end of the United States' monopoly on nuclear weapons, the establishment of a communist regime in China, stalled economic recoveries in the fragile nations of Japan and Germany, and the first Indo-Pak war over the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir (Kashmir).<sup>2</sup> The initial policy of the United States towards India and Pakistan was one of neglect. After the emergence of communist China in 1949, policy makers in the United States saw the region growing in importance as part of its containment strategy. Fear of communism spreading to South Asia was a serious concern of the United States. The initial strategy was to use every opportunity and resources available to keep

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account of Nehru, his foreign policies, and their effect on India will be discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 78.

the subcontinent oriented with the West.<sup>3</sup> Here, the primary intent was to assist both countries in defending themselves. As Stephen Cohen analyzed, the aim of this policy was quite straightforward.

The goal . . . was to help India and Pakistan defend themselves against external attack, to obtain bases and facilities from which the United States might strike the Soviet Union with its own forces, and to help both states meet the threat from internal (often communist-led) insurrection and subversion.<sup>4</sup>

The United States conducted this strategy in South Asia as it did throughout the world by forming alliances, conducting military sales, and providing economic assistance. Although India's nonalignment movement precluded it from joining any alliances with the United States, it did not prevent Nehru from accepting monetary assistance, loans, and grants from the American capitalists.<sup>5</sup>

Even though the United States correctly assessed the Kashmir dispute as the destabilizing factor in the region, the focus was to avoid tilting toward either country in order to prevent offending the other and affecting a possible solution on the Kashmir problem.<sup>6</sup> This unbiased policy approach by Washington towards the subcontinent mirrored the British, who the Americans viewed as the authority on South Asian affairs. This concept of even-handed diplomacy in South Asia would soon become a common trap for American policy makers for the remainder of the century.

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 55.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2001), 270.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>6</sup> McMahon, 78.

In spite of this strategy, the first three years of Indo-American relations was uneventful. This changed on June 25, 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War. United States policy in Asia became more focused and deliberate. American forces intervened in Korea and the Taiwan Straits, and President Harry Truman increased foreign aid to French forces battling communists in Indochina.<sup>7</sup>

At first, Nehru supported the American's condemnation of Chinese aggression in the Korean peninsula, but reemphasized his nonalignment philosophy. He also avoided committing Indian fighting forces in Korea or commenting on Taiwan and Indochina.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, one month later, Nehru surprised Truman with his support for China's permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. This move resulted in the first diplomatic chill between both countries. American officials viewed this support from India as a reward for Chinese aggression.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Tilt Toward Pakistan (1954-61)**

With the Chinese in Eastern Asia and the Soviets in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, the United States was concerned about the alarming expansion of communism. The fear of a Soviet advance into the oil fields of the Middle East caused the United States to develop a defense plan for this vital region. Part of this plan was to strengthen the western flank of the region. Geography was a major factor, if not the defining factor, for the United States to seek a military alliance with Pakistan. Consequently, this decision had a negative impact on

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 82-83.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 84.

Indo-United States relations with Nehru accusing the United States of bringing the Cold War to South Asia.<sup>10</sup>

In the years following the 1954 alliance, the United States found the arrangement with Pakistan both burdensome and costly. American officials still considered India as the key state in the region, but relations continued to be cumbersome, as India remained steadfast in its nonalignment principle. In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower attempted again to adopt a more balanced approach to the subcontinent. Moreover, the United States feared that India's slow growth and difficulties in industrializing would make it vulnerable to Soviet influence. The end result was expanded economic programs with India.<sup>11</sup> Although President Eisenhower renewed the Pakistani alliance in 1959, he attempted to reassure Nehru that military sales to Pakistan would not be used against India.<sup>12</sup> The Pakistanis would prove him wrong in six years.

### **The Tilt Towards Indian (1961-1965)**

The first substantial cooperation between India and the United States occurred after President John F. Kennedy was elected in 1961. The Kennedy administration brought a more focused foreign policy approach to the developing world. The primary emphasis was on neutral bloc countries, and according to White House advisor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Kennedy was most interested in India, which he had long regarded as 'the key area' in Asia."<sup>13</sup> The new

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>12</sup> James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden, eds., *India: A Country Study*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 546.

<sup>13</sup> As quoted in McMahon, 273.

administration also considered China as a hostile country and viewed India in a counter-balancing role. The Indian government, not surprisingly, responded positively to the Kennedy administration and its optimistic assessment of India.<sup>14</sup>

Kennedy expanded the economic programs started by Eisenhower in a deliberate tilt towards India. Unfortunately, the United States Congress ended these programs in 1962 after the Indo-Soviet combat aircraft arrangement.<sup>15</sup> Then, almost as quickly, American support resumed with the onset of the Sino-Indian War in 1962. The Kennedy administration saw this conflict as an opportunity to end India's nonalignment and ally it with the West.<sup>16</sup> Military aid and defensive systems were provided to India for several years after the war. Both countries also participated in military cooperation and intelligence sharing.<sup>17</sup> This included air force joint training exercises, American spy planes in surveillance of Tibet, and U.S. Air Force planes landing and fueling in India.<sup>18</sup>

Pakistan eyed these growing ties between the United States and India with great trepidation. Regardless of Kennedy's deliberate strategy to increase ties with India, the United States once again attempted to maintain an even-handed approach to the subcontinent. Kennedy further exacerbated this strategic blunder after the President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan, visited Moscow and Beijing in March 1965. With a growing military presence in Vietnam, the President became incensed at this affront committed by Pakistan. Kennedy cancelled Khan's

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, 132.

<sup>18</sup> Rotter, 75.

invitation to the White House just nine days before his scheduled arrival. Alas, in an attempt to maintain fairness, the administration also postponed the visit of the new Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, to avoid offending Pakistan.<sup>19</sup> Kennedy only succeeded in insulting both countries equally.

### **Rising India (1965-1979)**

India and Pakistan fought their second war over Kashmir in 1965. To a shocked Washington, this war involved two armies equipped with American weapons and military hardware. Subsequently, the United States suspended military assistance to both countries. The war itself was a vindication for the Indian Army after their humiliating defeat by the Chinese in 1962. It also firmly established India as the preeminent military power in the subcontinent.<sup>20</sup> Over the next five years, India remained on the periphery of American policy as the United States became more embroiled in Vietnam. After Nehru's death in 1964 and the war of 1965, India itself became more introspective. Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, was now Prime Minister and used the time to consolidate her power and focus on domestic issues. By the 1970s, relations between the United States and India continued to deteriorate.

President Richard Nixon was now in office. His primary foreign policy goal was to establish a dialogue with China. To this end, the Nixon administration used Pakistan as a means to engage China. In 1971, as the United States was going through Pakistan to diplomatically court China, India signed a

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<sup>19</sup> McMahon, 322.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed analysis of this and the other Indo-Pakistani wars, see Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia: The Indo-Pakistani Conflicts since 1947*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boulder: Westview, 1994).

friendship treaty with the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup> Soon after the signing, in December 1971, India and Pakistan were again at war. The result was another Indian victory and a divided Pakistan with the creation of Bangladesh, the former East Pakistan. Beyond the regional supremacy of the Indian armed forces, the acme of India's demonstrated power for the decade was its nuclear weapons test in 1974. The reaction by the United States was a prompt reduction and eventual cessation of the transfer of nuclear-related technology to India.<sup>22</sup>

India had hope for improved relations after President Jimmy Carter was elected in 1977.<sup>23</sup> A receptive government in New Delhi under Prime Minister Morarji Desai of the Janata Party enhanced this perception. However, this warming trend ended in December 1979 with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. The United States mistook the Soviet invasion as a direct threat to the strategic oil reserves in the Middle East. The Carter administration responded to this threat in three ways. First, it renewed its friendship and alliance with Pakistan. Second, President Carter established an Indian Ocean naval fleet. Third, the military's presence on Diego Garcia was enhanced.<sup>24</sup> All three actions were in turn perceived in New Delhi as direct threats to India's security. Indian officials saw it as more negative American influence in its region. On a similar note, India's reluctance to condemn the Soviet invasion was perceived by

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<sup>21</sup> Heitzman, 547.

<sup>22</sup> Cohen, 279.

<sup>23</sup> Heitzman, 548.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Diego Garcia is a British dependent territory in the middle of the Indian Ocean. It is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, or Chagos Islands. Presently, it contains a U.S.-U.K. military base and is located approximately 1,200 miles south of India.

Washington as another example of Indian hypocrisy and contradicted New Delhi's long-standing principles against imperialism.

### **Stagnant India (1979-1991)**

A warming trend emerged in the early 1980s between Indira Gandhi and President Ronald Reagan. The Reagan administration expanded economic and scientific cooperation in an attempt to counteract Soviet influence in India. These positive trends continued under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi with his two state visits to Washington between 1985 and 1987.<sup>25</sup> This was reciprocated with Washington's support for Indian intervention in Sri Lanka in 1987 and the Maldives in 1988. Be that as it may, India still possessed reservations and contrary perspectives on the United States' role in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and Central America.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, the United States continued military support to Pakistan remained a major source of tension between the two governments.

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 caused the United States to reevaluate its policies in South Asia. This reassessment was beneficial to India in several ways. First, it resulted in an almost complete withdrawal of American military and intelligence assets from Pakistan. Second, it devalued Pakistan's worth for American strategic planners. Third, it shifted the United States focus from Soviet containment to nuclear proliferation. And fourth, it resulted in the United States Congress enacting the Pressler Amendment. This amendment suspended military and economic assistance to Pakistan unless the President could

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 548.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 549.

certify that Pakistan was not developing nuclear weapons. The greatest benefit for India was its exclusion from the amendment.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Post-Cold War Period (1991-2001)**

Two major events occurred in the 1990s that forced India to reevaluate itself. The first was the collapse of the Soviet Union, a close friend and ally. The second was India's own financial crisis and its continued economic stability. As a result, New Delhi had to make several concessions to the International Monetary Fund and other global lending institutions to avoid defaulting on its international debt. These concessions included structural economic reforms and a liberalized, less protected economy.<sup>28</sup>

The United States embraced these reforms and responded with increased trade and investment. Economics emerged as an increasingly central component of Indo-United States relations.<sup>29</sup> By 1995, the Indian economic program had reached a plateau. Despite the high tariffs maintained by New Delhi, United States trade continued to increase through the decade. In 1996, the second Clinton administration noticed India's economic potential and pursued a deliberate Indian policy. This new economic policy towards India did not last after New Delhi conducted several nuclear weapon tests in May 1998. After the Pakistan nuclear tests, the administration was faced with a potential crisis in South Asia and scrambled to keep the non-proliferation regime intact. Its efforts

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 550.

<sup>28</sup> Satu P. Limaye, "India-East Asia Relations: India's Latest Asian Incarnation," in *Comparative Connection* 2, no. 3 (2000): 126-126.. Also available on-line at <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/cc/003Qoa.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr. and Stanley A. Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), 442.

had no effect on convincing Pakistan or India to reverse their nuclear programs or join the non-proliferation regime.

Tensions in the region reached a new level in May 1999 when Pakistani forces crossed the Line of Control at Kargil in the disputed state of Kashmir. This diplomatic gamble to make Kashmir an international concern and to test the threshold of the nuclear standoff shared by both countries backfired for Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> To its credit, New Delhi exhibited tremendous restraint and isolated the fighting along the area of penetration. Although this strategy was costly by way of Indian casualties, it paid some dividends in elevating India's global prestige. In other words, India behaved like a responsible power and was treated as such by the international community.

In part due to India's self-control during the crisis, Clinton decided to visit the region in early 2000, the first presidential visit to the subcontinent in over 22 years. Even though Clinton failed to receive any concrete commitments on nuclear issues with New Delhi, he did succeed in developing needed goodwill between the two governments. A positive starting point that the new Bush administration has used to begin building a better relationship with India.

## **SUMMARY**

Why was India pushed to the periphery by the United States in the Cold War? In large part, Nehru's nonalignment ideology that ran counter to several of Washington's foreign policy initiatives, namely its alliances and containment strategies.<sup>31</sup> For the United States, its sentiments for India began to decline after

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<sup>30</sup> Cohen, 185-186.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 24.

the Kennedy administration. New Delhi continued to condemn and question American involvement and policies around the globe, all the while either ignoring or failing to question America's chief protagonist – the Soviet Union. Increasingly, the United States' perception was India's nonalignment doctrine meant anti-West, or more succinctly, anti-American principles.

A cursory review of Indo-United States relations reveals few positive or productive events on which to build a future partnership. Beyond nuclear weapons and the Kashmir dispute, are there other demanding challenges in South Asia? Is there a growing importance of the region to American vital interests? The United States and India do share some common values and goals. The Clinton administration was correct in identifying economics as a good starting point in enhancing relations with India. Nevertheless, other converging interests between Washington and New Delhi will emerge, not just because of current events in Afghanistan, but also due to changing global perceptions and common strategic interests.

## Chapter 2: India's Changing Strategic Outlook

What is the answer to the atom bomb? The answer to an atom bomb is an atom bomb, nothing else.<sup>32</sup>

Since independence, India has been a fledgling great power. It possesses a consistently growing international influence but only negligible international power. International influence is defined as the ability to affect other nations beyond one's regional boundaries through diplomatic and political pressures. For this argument, international power is defined as the ability to influence other nations beyond one's regional boundaries either through economic or military means. Economic means are trade embargoes, sanctions or other methods of economic coercion. Military means are the ability to project power beyond one's geographic region.

New Delhi's strategic value and influence are growing. Although India currently possesses very limited international power, it cannot be disputed that India exercises an enormous amount of influence over its regional neighbors.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, in spite of international condemnation and criticism, India's nuclear tests combined with its modernizing military and space advances have increased its real and self-perceived value in the world. This chapter will explore India's policies and how these evolved from an ideological perspective during the Cold War to a more realistic perspective after India declared itself a nuclear power.

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<sup>32</sup> Excerpt from a speech given by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the current Prime Minister of India, in 1964 to the Indian Parliament about China's first nuclear weapons test. As quoted in Kenneth J. Cooper, "India's Leaders Speak of Vindication, Urge Calm and Unity," *The Washington Post*, 29 May 1998.

<sup>33</sup> Cohen, 36.

## COLD WAR OUTLOOK

Nehru dominated Indian foreign and domestic policy until his death in 1964. After independence, he served as both Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs. Nehru's authority and personal magnetism gave him a consensus to define India's national interests and foreign policy goals. In the early years of Indian independence, Nehru's nonalignment concept did bring significant international prestige to India.<sup>34</sup> This unity of effort and national power developed by Nehru shaped Indian thought throughout the Cold War.

### Nehruvianism

Economically, Nehru envisioned a state-centric socialistic economy mimicking the Soviet Union model of the early twentieth century. Nehru idealized the Soviet model and its ability to quickly transform that nation from an agrarian society to an industrial power by the 1940s. Coupled with this industrial vision, Nehru also had an innate fascination with science.<sup>35</sup> This attraction led Nehru to believe that science could be the key instrument in making India a developed country. This philosophy started India down the path of nuclear research and the development of atomic energy to help the nation industrialize. It also had the Janus effect of giving birth to India's nuclear weapons program.<sup>36</sup>

Deeply affected by British colonial rule and a liberal Cambridge education, Nehru developed a deep, ideological perspective on foreign affairs.

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<sup>34</sup> Heitzman, 518.

<sup>35</sup> Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State* (New York: Zed Books, 1998), 46-47.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

This manifested itself into Nehru's nonalignment policy, which he defined as anti-colonial, anti-apartheid, and anti-imperialist. Nehru envisioned an alternative to the bipolar world of East versus West with a third pole composed of Asian and African nations behind India's moral leadership. As part of this movement, Nehru established his *Panchsheel* (five principles) agreement with China in 1954. The agreement established the foundation of future Sino-Indian friendship based on territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and cooperation, and peaceful coexistence.<sup>37</sup> The Chinese shattered all of these principles eight years later with their war against India in 1962.

This conflict along the Himalayans was centered on a disagreement over the frontier border between Tibet and Kashmir. In an effort to force an agreement on the disputed territory, Chinese forces invaded the region in late October 1962. China easily defeated an ill-equipped and unprepared Indian Army. The Chinese unilateral cease-fire weeks later, after they achieved their territorial aims, only added insult and embarrassment to India's defeat. The United States and Great Britain came to India's assistance with arms and supplies, but to no avail and arriving after the Chinese victory.<sup>38</sup> The event called into question the legitimacy of Nehru's foreign and defense policies.

### **Revised Nehruvianism**

The 1962 war severely weakened Nehru's confidence. After suffering a stroke in January 1964, Nehru would later die in May of that year. His daughter, Indira Gandhi, assumed her father's position as Prime Minister a few years after

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<sup>37</sup> Hardgrave, 432-433.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 434.

his death. Although Mrs. Gandhi maintained several aspects of her father's ideology, she was not afraid to use force to achieve her policy goals. As a result, India became more aggressive regionally against its neighbors and internally against domestic unrest. For example, during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 in Kashmir, the Indian military quickly expanded the conflict across the India-Pakistan frontier to include a naval blockade in the Arabian Sea. Other applications of military intervention under this new militant Nehruvianism were used in East Pakistan in 1971 that created the nation of Bangladesh, and in the Punjab in 1984, which led to Mrs. Gandhi's assassination later that year. Succeeding his mother, Rajiv Gandhi continued this tradition with regional invention in Sri Lanka in 1987 and the Maldives in 1988.

Internationally, India continued to cling to Nehru's nonalignment movement, but under Mrs. Gandhi's leadership the concept increasingly began to fade in its appeal. Although Mrs. Gandhi maintained the Nehruvian concepts of India's greatness and its struggle against the unbalanced bipolar international system, she replaced Nehru's opportunities with threat perceptions.<sup>39</sup> No longer did the developing world in Africa and Asia united against the superpowers seem viable. China had proved to be an adversary and not a partner in the non-alignment movement. Pakistan was increasing its military strength through the United States, and the Indian Union was experiencing internal strife with its minority populations. In this aspect, India became preoccupied with Pakistan and

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<sup>39</sup> Cohen, 41.

internal discord. She also used this occasion to consolidate her own political power and to expand India's paramilitary size and role in internal affairs.

Through the remainder of the Cold War, New Delhi continued to isolate itself. India's protective and state-dominated economy marginalized its participation in international markets and its slow rate of growth made the Indian economy irrelevant in expanding global trade, investments, and commerce.<sup>40</sup> For the United States, India's growing alliance with the Soviet Union, its support of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, and its tacit support for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan collectively kept India relegated to Washington's periphery. In addition, India's refusal to sign the Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968 and its subsequent nuclear weapons test in 1974 combined to question New Delhi's longstanding commitment to abolish nuclear weapons.

Very few opportunities were presented or pursued by either country. In India, the established suspicion of American foreign policy and intentions became the norm. The United States armed Pakistan during the 1950s, the United States opposed India in the 1971 war that created Bangladesh, and the United States was perceived as aligned with China during the 1970s and allied with Pakistan in the 1980s.<sup>41</sup> Overall, the Cold War witnessed the relationship between India and the United States languished under the Gandhi's.

### **POST-COLD WAR OUTLOOK**

Since the end of the Cold War, India's focus and policy have begun to change from its Nehruvian origins to a more pragmatic perspective. The shift has

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<sup>40</sup> Limaye, 125.

<sup>41</sup> Cohen, 42.

primarily occurred in the government's economic and foreign policies. The catalysts for this change were the collapse of the Soviet Union and India's financial crisis. Nearly simultaneous, both events forced India to face three harsh realities.

First, the Soviet Union collapse revealed New Delhi's over dependence on a single power.<sup>42</sup> Second, the demise of the bipolar world gutted India's nonalignment regime and left its foreign policy apparatus without direction. Third, the Nehruvian economic model was outdated, ineffectual, and laden with foreign debt. The concept was outdated in its slow growth rate and inability to develop the industrial infrastructure of a modern economy, and ineffectual in its ability to alleviate poverty and compete in the global market place. Finally, India's foreign debt was increasing at an alarming rate of about US\$8 billion a year.<sup>43</sup>

### **Economic Changes**

The monetary crisis in 1991 required India to seek assistance from international financial institutions. In doing so, the Indian government had to make dramatic moves to liberalize its economy and change its past policies, to include structural adjustments to its economy. Since that time, New Delhi has consistently taken steps to open its markets, relax strict trade policies, and reduce high tariffs.<sup>44</sup> These reforms have given the Indian economy sound economic growth, increased foreign investment, and increased growth in foreign trade.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>43</sup> Heitzman, 324.

<sup>44</sup> Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, *2001 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 176.

Regrettably, these changes have not been enough. Despite a good deal of excitement generated in the United States after India started liberalizing its economy in the early 1990s, imports and foreign investment have become stagnant since 1996.<sup>45</sup> Poverty, inadequate infrastructure, a growing population, and a burdensome bureaucracy have restrained the Indian economy. In addition, India still remains a restrictive economy in many respects. Tariff rates remain some of the highest in the world, particularly on domestically produced goods. These rates vary greatly from the base tariff of 35 percent. For example, chocolate is 70 percent, raisins 120 percent, and imported liquor an incredible 204 percent tariff.<sup>46</sup>

Recognizing some of these challenges, India has attempted to broaden its economic reforms. Most of these changes, however, have not been generated by the center in New Delhi. Regional states, in particular Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, have led the economic revolution in India. These innovations at the regional level have helped economic growth. The gross national product of India was the eleventh in the world in 1999 at US\$421 billion, but that was nearly half of China's at US\$929 billion.<sup>47</sup> Although these numbers may not seem surprising, India and China were about equal ten years ago in gross domestic production per capita and has since been surpassed by China.<sup>48</sup> The current

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>47</sup> The World Book Group, *World Book: World Development Report 1999/2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 230-231.

<sup>48</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, "India: The Growth Imperative," *McKinsey & Company Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.mckinsey.com/knowledge/mgi/reports/india.asp>; Internet; accessed 20 September 2001.

Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has acknowledged the need for India to develop a more balanced and higher rate of growth beyond 8 percent to offset India's growing population, continued poverty, and unemployment.<sup>49</sup>

This statement notwithstanding, India has been slow in making the necessary changes in its economy to achieve this level of growth. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, an American consulting firm, it concluded after an extensive sixteen-month study that Indian growth was restricted by a multiplicity of government regulations and widespread publicly owned companies. These barriers inhibited economic growth by approximately 4 percent per year.<sup>50</sup> The International Monetary Fund was also recently critical of Indian economic policy. It stated India needed to liberalize its labor practices and increase privatization in order to spur growth.<sup>51</sup> Throughout the past decade, as reflected in Vajpayee's comment, New Delhi has been long on rhetoric but short on results. The recent changes in India's economy have been a positive sign for its future potential as a great power, but will it be enough to match India's changing strategic concepts?

### **Strategic Changes**

The Nehruvian idea lacked a coherent security strategy. Indian policy focused on nonalignment and not on military affairs or defensive strategies.<sup>52</sup> This stemmed from Nehru's distrust of the military and resulted in its deliberate

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<sup>49</sup> *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 11 September 2001.

<sup>50</sup> McKinsey, 1.

<sup>51</sup> BBC Business News, "IMF Downbeat on India," *BBC Online* [home page on-line]; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid\\_1492000/1492235.htm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid_1492000/1492235.htm); Internet; accessed 15 August 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Cohen, 130.

exclusion from the government's decision-making process for foreign policy.<sup>53</sup> The Nehruvian legacy of military segregation from government policy making and tight civilian control continued after his death and still exists today. This policy impeded the civilian leadership from fully grasping military affairs and defense strategies. On the contrary, it did not hamper the government's assessment of India as a great power.

India's desire for recognition as a major regional power in Asia is not new. With a change in its international outlook after the Cold War, New Delhi's aspiration for recognition as a major international power is. India also wants recognition and account of its strategic interests, which stretch from the Suez Canal to the Straights of Malacca.<sup>54</sup> The current coalition government in India, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is responsible for this more pragmatic view of the world and India's place in it.

Leading the charge in changing India's strategic perspective is the Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh. As a realist, Singh sees India's foreign policy as one that does not rely solely on idealism, as do the Nehruvians,

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<sup>53</sup> Nehru's strong suspicion of the military was influenced by his living under British rule in India. The extensive use of the British Raj to use the military to control dissent and quell violence during India's struggle for independence were the cause for this mistrust. Nehru mistook the military's loyalty to their British commanders as a lack of patriotism and commitment by the army to have an independent India. These feelings were grossly misplaced and overlooked the fact that the army in colonial India was under a long legacy of civilian control and firmly believed in this system of governance. For a detail analysis of the Indian military and their colonial heritage, see Stephen P. Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971) and T.A. Heathcote, *The Military in British India: The Development of British Land Forces in South Asia 1600-1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> Mandavi Mehta and Teresita C. Schaffer, "India and the United States: Security Interests," *Center for Strategic and International Studies – South Asian Monitor Online* [home page on-line]; available from [www.csis.org/saprog/sam34.htm](http://www.csis.org/saprog/sam34.htm); Internet; accessed 15 August 2001.

but also on self-interest.<sup>55</sup> He also views the historical anti-American stance of Indian foreign policy as absurd. According to Singh, “it makes no sense for India to gratuitously alienate a state that will remain economically important and strategically central to India for the foreseeable future.”<sup>56</sup>

This new found Indian pragmatism is making its elites take a hard look at its security environment. China is presently modernizing its military and nuclear arsenal. In response, the Indian government is increasing its defense expenditures to modernize and better equip the military establishment. The 1999-2000 defense budget was US\$ 12.2 billion, more than a 6.5 percent increase in spending from the previous year.<sup>57</sup> Pakistan is viewed as a pariah state that supports and exports terrorists into Indian Kashmir. Both of these countries are nuclear powers, which India has fought wars with in the past, and both currently have long-standing border disputes with India. Two of its neighbors, Myanmar and again Pakistan, are currently military regimes that are allied with China and receive military support. Also, India believes that China is attempting to contain it through friendly ties and weapons sells to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.<sup>58</sup> All told, this assessment amounts to a rather bleak outlook with challenges for Indian foreign policy. Nowhere is this austere point of view more prominent than in India’s nuclear program.

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<sup>55</sup> Cohen, 44.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>57</sup> Bureau of Political and Military Affairs, “Annual Report of Military Expenditures,” *U.S. Department of State Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/amiex.html>; Internet; accessed on 3 September 2001.

<sup>58</sup> Rahul Bedi, “India and China vie for regional supremacy,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 1 September 2000, and Umer Farooq, “Pakistan Navy seeking ships from China,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly* 35, no.6 (2001).

India's pursuit of nuclear weapons and its overt declaration of capabilities are signs of its perceived insecurities in the world community. India publicly declared these insecurities and perceptions in May 1998. In many ways, the nuclear tests only demonstrate the beginning of India's changing security perceptions.<sup>59</sup> The current Indian government appears poised to continue with its nuclear weapons program. Jaswant Singh views them as a symbol of national power.<sup>60</sup> Ambitious in its scope, India's nuclear program is limited by its capabilities for the foreseeable future. Perhaps recognizing these limitations, New Delhi maintains an ambiguous stance on its nuclear abilities.

Be that as it may, India's ambition is to develop a respectable nuclear deterrent. The problem is India currently lacks the technology to make its deterrent effective against its main rival, China. The only systems India possesses for delivering nuclear weapons are aircraft and ballistic missiles.

The aircraft of the Indian Air Force are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, but are limited by range and vulnerable to radar detection, surface to air missiles, and air intercept by opposing air forces. This asset only has limited deterrent value against Pakistan. The Indian Army owns the missile component of India's deterrent. The primary missile is the Prithvi short-range ballistic missile. It has a range of approximately 250 kilometers and lacks a precision guidance system.<sup>61</sup> The second missile in the Indian inventory is the experimental Agni II

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<sup>59</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2001), 117.

<sup>60</sup> Cohen, 44.

<sup>61</sup> Bharat-Rakshak, "Indian Missiles," *Bharat Rakshak Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/missile/>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2001.

intermediate range ballistic missile. The last Agni II test was conducted on 17 January 2001 to a range of over 2,100 kilometers.<sup>62</sup> Induction of the Agni II in the military inventory is presumed to be ongoing.<sup>63</sup> Again, these missile systems are an effective deterrent against Pakistan, but lack any plausible deterrent value against China with their inability to range high value targets in China. Research is on going to develop a longer-range ballistic missile with a range of 3,000 to 3,500 kilometer, but assuming successful flight tests in the future will probable not be fielded for another ten years.<sup>64</sup>

A lack of an effective deterrent against China contradicts India's present nuclear policy and undermines its credibility. There is the possibility that continued successes in India's space program could shorten the development time for a viable missile deterrent. The successful Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle has already benefited the Agni with technology transfers. Continued successes in the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle could do the same for India's next generation ballistic missile. In the mean time, the present doctrine is to keep India's nuclear program opaque and the warheads and delivery systems separate in what former Rand analyst Ashley Tellis labels a "force in being."<sup>65</sup>

## SUMMARY

New Delhi sees itself as a rising great power, and rightfully so when assessing its growing population, emerging computer software and technology

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Bedi, "India develops next generation of Agni," *Jane's Defence Weekly* 35, no.8 (2001).

<sup>64</sup> Tellis, 569.

<sup>65</sup> Tellis, 367.

industry, modernizing military, maturing space program, and developing economy. On the other hand, India still has a number of problems preventing it from receiving great power recognition. Mired in a long-standing dispute over Kashmir, continued insurgencies within its borders and immense poverty are all unrepresentative of a great power in today's international community.

In India's more pragmatic foreign policy, it appears to want closer ties with the United States. Nonetheless, India's nuclear status alone will not guarantee a robust relationship with the United States. If New Delhi is able to accelerate economic growth, invest in infrastructure, and reduce or eliminate its protective policies, then American business interest will grow. If New Delhi is able to overcome the challenges of poverty and infrastructure growth, then American economic interest will grow. Economic and social developments are important to sustain American interest in India. If New Delhi is able to meet these economic and social challenges, then India will soon be a significant player in the international arena, and a desirable partner for the United States.

## Chapter 3: America's Changing Strategic Outlook

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *Political* connection as possible . . . 'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.<sup>66</sup>

George Washington aptly expressed American individualism and its instinctive revulsion to foreign intervention and engagement from this excerpt in his farewell address in 17 September 1796. A well-founded ideology in the eighteenth century, which occasionally reappears today, the role of the United States has dramatically evolved over its young history. A deliberate approach to engage itself internationally emerged in the twentieth century. After the Second World War, the United States experienced a paradigm shift. No longer an isolationist nation, it changed both domestic and foreign policies to effectively employ its diplomatic, economic, and military resources around the globe.

Soon, an ideological struggle against the Soviet Union emerged and what ensued was the Cold War. Not heeding Washington's advice, the United States pursued an active policy of alliances in a zero-sum game to isolate the spread of communism. In short, the Soviet Union collapsed not by military power, but through economic supremacy. The end of the Cold War resulted in a multipolar world with a lone superpower and what many perceived as the second paradigm shift of the century. The question of this shift will be addressed later in this chapter. More importantly, the United States changed its strategic outlook under

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<sup>66</sup> As quoted in Robert J. Myers, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century: The Relevance of Realism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 1.

the rubric of this new world order. One area of the world where this reassessment took place was Asia.

### ASIA'S IMPORTANCE

Geographically, Asia encompasses the largest region of the world. It stretches from the Red Sea to the Pacific Ocean and from Russia to the Indian Ocean. The region contains advanced industrial nations and impoverished developing countries. Unlike other regions of the world, Asia remains a hostile region after the Cold War. Throughout the continent, defense expenditures are increasing, two nations are recently declared nuclear powers, two regional competitors are modernizing their conventional forces, and Islamic fundamentalism is increasing from Saudi Arabia to the Philippines.<sup>67</sup>

For the United States, Asia presents a unique strategic challenge. The potential for conflict in the region is high. With increased defense spending, Asia is developing as a neighborhood prone to escalating military competition. Even in the absence of a peer competitor in the region for the United States, emerging powers can create regional instabilities and problems that are vital to the United States and its interests.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the vastness of the region creates several obstacles to military planners. The lack of military bases between Japan and the Middle East makes it extremely difficult to project power and sustain military actions.<sup>69</sup> As a result of these challenges, the United States is changing its

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<sup>67</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 112.

<sup>68</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 4.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

strategic focus toward Asia. A physical demonstration of this change is the recent decision to shift some pre-positioned equipment from Europe to the Asian theater, and most likely to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.<sup>70</sup>

Presently, the region is home to two emerging powers, China and India. These two nations are globally unique as they both have regional superpower ambitions, both possess nuclear weapons, both are modernizing their militaries, and they share a common border in dispute.<sup>71</sup> As a secular, democratic nation, India presents less of a threat to the interests of the United States. China is more problematic. The state is governed by an unpredictable communist regime. It frequently demonstrates an antagonistic attitude to the presence of the United States near China's borders and questions American strategic policy in the region. Currently, Chinese nuclear weapons only pose a threat to its neighbors and vital American interests in the region, but not to the continental United States. On the contrary, this could change with China's modernization program and acquisition of multiple nuclear warheads.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to defense, Asia is an economic power critical to the United States. The region's monetary health does impact on the American economy, as demonstrated by the financial crisis of Southeast Asia in 1997. Trade is up almost 120 percent since 1990, with the Asian market as a major destination.<sup>73</sup> Asia

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<sup>70</sup> Associated Press, "Army Moving Stored Combat Equipment from Europe to Asia, Signaling Shift in Strategy," *Foxnews Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,33291,00.html>; Internet; accessed 30 August 2001.

<sup>71</sup> Kennedy, 177.

<sup>72</sup> Kissinger, 147.

<sup>73</sup> Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, *The President's 2000 Annual Report on the Trade Agreements Program* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), A1.

accounts for two-thirds of all trade in the United States and that trade equates to one-tenth of the gross national product of the United States.<sup>74</sup> The economic strength of Asia coupled with its security concerns makes Asia a region of great importance to the United States. The United States must engage the two dominating regional competitors, China and India, in order to maintain stability and enhance its influence in the region. The approach of the United States in Asia will continue to hold economics and security as the core issues of foreign policy for the foreseeable future.

#### **CLINTON ADMINISTRATION**

When President William Clinton was elected president in 1993, a common debate heard was the coming paradigm shift in the strategy of the United States. Even Clinton himself spoke of the challenges of shaping an entirely new foreign policy. This talk of a new paradigm was overinflated. Even though a change occurred in the focus of American foreign policy from military containment to economic expansion, the apparatus and methods in which the United States engaged other nations did not change.

The primary goal of foreign policy in Clinton's first administration was economics. In this endeavor, he created a new office called the National Economic Council, and modeled it after the National Security Council.<sup>75</sup> Ironically, Clinton copied the archetypical structure of the Cold War for his new

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<sup>74</sup> Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, "Fact Sheet: Why APEC Matters to Americans," *U.S. Department of State Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://state.gov/e/rls/>; Internet; accessed 15 July 2001.

<sup>75</sup> Vincent A. Auger, "National Security Council System After the Cold War," in *U.S. Foreign Policy After the Cold War*, ed. Randall B. Ripley and James M. Lindsay (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 42.

policy organization. The purpose of this new office was to ensure economics played a dominant role in foreign policy recommendations. A senior Clinton advisor, who said, "everyone acknowledges that economics now plays a central role in foreign policy – the battle is over,"<sup>76</sup> best summed up this attitude of outlook. The Cold War was over and the habitual policy focus on security matters seemed antiquated to a new administration.

It was not long before the old concerns returned. The new world order was not benign and the Clinton administration was soon faced with security challenges around the globe. There were problems developing in Iraq, Iran, Bosnia, Israel, and eastern Africa. In Asia, the dictatorship in North Korea was troublesome, the problems between India and Pakistan in Kashmir were escalating, and an emerging China was becoming more repressive. The Pentagon was soon deploying forces to Haiti, Somalia, the Balkans, and the Persian Gulf. The United Nations also was playing an expanded role in security operations. There have been fifty-four United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO) since 1948. Of these, thirty-six were established after 1991.<sup>77</sup>

Surprisingly, the relationship between India and the United States had not changed, even though India was liberalizing its economy and the United States was making economics the center of its foreign policy. Diplomacy between the two nations was troublesome. India refused to sign the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and also turned down a proposal to

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>77</sup> U.N. Department of Public Information, "United Nations Peacekeeping from 1991 to 2000: Statistical Data and Charts," *United Nations Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/dpko/pub/pko.htm>; Internet; accessed on 24 October 2001.

participate in joint talks with the United States, Russia, China and Pakistan to create a nuclear free zone in South Asia. New Delhi was also upset over Washington's refusal to add Pakistan to its list of state-sponsors of terrorism in 1993.<sup>78</sup> Even the visits of Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to Washington in 1994 and Hillary Clinton's tour of India in 1995 did little to improve relations. On the whole, it appeared the first Clinton administration was not interested in India.<sup>79</sup>

After India tested its nuclear weapons in May 1998 and Pakistan followed with tests of its own, the administration changed its view on South Asian policy. Angered over its failure to obtain India's signature on the CTBT and surprised by New Delhi's willingness to cast aside America's non-proliferation regime, Clinton moved to punish India through economic sanctions. Fearing the possibility of nuclear war on the subcontinent, the United States began a full diplomatic assault on New Delhi and Islamabad to roll back their nuclear programs and stop any programs to weaponize their nuclear arsenals.

Encouraged by talks between the two prime ministers of India and Pakistan in February 1999, Washington's hopes were again dashed by the Pakistan's military incursion into Kashmir later that year. The Kargil war became a watershed in diplomacy for the United States. For the first time in the history of relations between India and the United States, Washington supported New Delhi in its war against Pakistan. The self-restraint and control exhibited by the Indian government and military impressed the Clinton administration. These actions by

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<sup>78</sup> Heitzman, 552.

<sup>79</sup> Cohen, 4.

New Delhi played a role in Clinton's decision to visit India the following year, the first visit by an American president in over twenty-two years.

The Clinton visit in March 2000 was an important first step in normalizing relations with New Delhi. President Clinton's speech to the Indian parliament was the highlight of the visit. In the speech, he made conciliatory remarks on India's greatness and the progress it had made since independence. However, his statement that "South Asia was the most dangerous place in the world" resulted in harsh public remarks by Indian politicians and the media.<sup>80</sup> Although the principal goal to attain concessions from New Delhi on nuclear proliferation failed, Clinton's visit was successful in improving goodwill between the two governments. This gesture set the stage for more receptive relations to occur with the new administration.

#### **BUSH ADMINISTRATION**

The Bush administration did not take long to build on Clinton's goodwill towards India. Months after assuming office, President George Bush had nominated his Indian ambassador, a process that took the Clinton administration over a year to accomplish. The first conciliatory step, it demonstrated the value of India to the new administration. With the growing strategic value of Asia already cemented in American foreign policy, the Bush administration faced its first crisis in April 2001. The collision between a U.S. Navy reconnaissance aircraft and a Chinese interceptor damaged Sino-United States relations and possibly indicated the more antagonistic approach the Bush administration would take towards

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 268.

China. The second conciliatory step towards India was made at the height of tensions between China and the United States over the reconnaissance plane. President Bush spent over two unscheduled hours meeting with Foreign and Defense Minister Jaswant Singh in Washington. An unprecedented step, it was another indication that the United States was serious about expanding ties with India, underscored by the timing of the meeting during a crisis with China.<sup>81</sup>

By the end of April 2001, the Bush administration continued to cause controversy in the international community. The unilateral decision by Bush to actively pursue a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system, even if it meant pulling the United States out of the long-standing Antiballistic Missile Treaty with Russia, was met with sharp global criticism. The proposal met resistance and some harsh words for China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and European allies of the United States.<sup>82</sup> In an attempt to obtain support for the BMD initiative, the Bush administration dispatched Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on a global tour to sell the BMD initiative.

One stop on Armitage's trip was India. These talks gave Washington the opportunity to discuss its nuclear policy with New Delhi, and again illustrated the rising value of India to the Bush administration.<sup>83</sup> More surprising than Armitage's visit was New Delhi's tacit support for the missile defense initiative, although the Vajpayee government used carefully selected words and fell short of

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<sup>81</sup> Scott Baldauf, "US and China Dance with India," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 April 2001.

<sup>82</sup> Mehta.

<sup>83</sup> Celia W. Dugger, "US Nurtures Growing Defense Bond with India," *The New York Times*, 12 May 2001.

officially endorsing the BMD project. Specifically, India endorsed the change in the nuclear policy of the United States to unilaterally reduce its nuclear stockpile. As a result, India was one of only three countries in the world to offer support for Bush's position. In short, India demonstrated a new sensitivity, if not understanding, of security concerns for the United States.

The most striking change in the foreign policy of the United States in over fifty years occurred on September 11, 2001. After the terrorist events of that day, the Bush administration made sweeping changes in how the United States would engage foreign countries in the future. Similar to what Hans Morgenthau asserted after the Second World War, international relations, power, and morality were again the foundations of American foreign policy.<sup>84</sup> The alleged paradigm shift after the Cold War still had tensions between global responsibilities and national interests. The few times in American history when these two were in agreement, like the Second World War, a dramatic change of policy occurred.<sup>85</sup> In his words and reactions to September's events, the Bush administration could have initiated a paradigm shift in American policies.

## **SUMMARY**

After the Cold War, the potential for the United States to improve their relationship toward India was great. India was liberalizing its economy at the same time the first Clinton administration was making economics the core of its foreign policy. The meeting never happened. Even though the United States

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<sup>84</sup> See Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 1985).

<sup>85</sup> Myers, 119.

became India's largest trade partner, formal relations remained stagnant as Clinton concentrated on his China policy and enforcing the global, but American-led, nuclear non-proliferation regime.

India's nuclear tests in 1998 forced the United States to reassess its policies towards the subcontinent. The economic sanctions and increased diplomatic pressure and awareness that followed caused the Clinton administration to begin a political shift towards India. The support provided to India during the Kargil war reinforced this perception of a tilt. The final event that cemented growing ties between Washington and New Delhi was the military coup in Pakistan. India was now being recognized as *the* stable and democratic country in Asia that warranted greater interest by the United States. President Clinton rewarded India on this newfound realization with his presidential visit in March 2000. Lacking substance, the visit was still a major accomplishment filled with positive symbols. The only substantive accord to emerge from the visit was an agreement to continue high-level exchanges on a regular basis. These feelings of goodwill were reciprocated with Vajpayee's visit to the United States in October 2000.

The new Bush administration committed itself to build on the groundwork laid by Clinton. In both words and deeds, Bush continued to engage India with positive measures. India was one of only a few countries to receive a special envoy to discuss Bush's BMD initiative. Within ten months of a new administration, Deputy Secretary of State Armitage and the Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff General Henry Shelton visited India to listen, discuss, learn and express the changing strategic thought emerging from Washington.

The terrorist events on the eleventh of September accelerated the growing ties between Washington and New Delhi. India offered unprecedented support to the United States in intelligence, military basing rights, and moral support. The extensive changes in the foreign policy of the United States found India's importance elevated for the long-term, despite the Bush administration's short-term focus on Pakistan. The Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfield reinforced this commitment with their subsequent visits to New Delhi. In the words of Ambassador Blackwell, India was now a "world power."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Robert D Blackwell "The Future of US-India Relations," *U.S. Department of State Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.state.gov/p/sa/rt>; Internet; accessed on 7 September 2001.

## Chapter 4: Creating a Strategic Partnership

The basis of forming any strategic partnership between the United States and India will involve overlapping strategic interests where cooperation between the two is desirable and necessary. The previous two chapters discussed the changing outlooks and security concerns of the United States and India. This chapter will highlight the similarities in these outlooks and the common ground on which to build the foundation for a strategic partnership.

The framework of this discussion will center on the three main pillars of foreign policy – diplomacy, economic issues, and military cooperation. Despite the onset of human security policy issues after the Cold War in the areas of human rights, environmental concerns and other social maladies,<sup>87</sup> none of these issues strike at the core of why Washington engages other countries. The primary focus of foreign relations of the United States, especially in light of current events, is security and steady economic growth. Additionally, none of these human security issues are a key priority for either country or an area of common ground to form a affiliation at the present time or in the foreseeable future.

The logical starting point for this partnership is naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean. This region encompasses the Persian Gulf to the west and the South China Seas to the east. India is in the middle of this strategically vital part of the world for the United States, a part of the world that includes the energy

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<sup>87</sup> For discussions on human security, see U.N. Development Program, “Redefining Security: The Human Dimension,” in *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Emma Rothchild, “What is Security? (The Quest for World Order),” in *Daedalus* 124, no. 53 (1995).

resources of the Middle East and the economic might of the Pacific Rim. Pursuit of a dedicated partnership with India will give the United States an opportunity to expand its influence in Asia. It is important to emphasize that the goal of this partnership is not to contain China. It is still in the interest of the United States to engage China and build a productive relationship. A partnership with India is a means to maintain the balance of power and stability in the region, and to protect and expand the interests of the United States.

### **WHY INDIA**

In the past, overlapping areas of interest between the United States and India existed but were short-lived. The Sino-Indian war of 1962 was one example.<sup>88</sup> What has made the present environment conducive for building a permanent relationship with India? What are the areas of mutual concern that will sustain this partnership for the long-term?

Both governments, as previously shown, have a changed strategic perspective of the world. The United States and India both view China as an emerging competitor in Asia. Both countries want to engage China, but New Delhi and Washington share suspicions about Beijing's goals.<sup>89</sup> The United States sees India as an emerging power in Asia and a regional rival to China. The main advantage India enjoys over China is its democratic tradition. As an established democracy, India may prove to be less problematic to work with in the long run than an autocratic China. Furthermore, India's elected officials command a modernizing professional army, a robust judiciary, a growing

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<sup>88</sup> Cohen, 265.

<sup>89</sup> Mehta.

economy, and a Western-oriented elite. India is also a stoic advocate for democracy in the developing world and a worthy example of a successful democracy in a multiethnic, multicultural society. Combined, these advantages act as bulwark against any Chinese ideas for expansion or hegemony in Asia.

As secular democracies with large Muslim populations, the United States and India share a common desire to reduce Islamic fundamentalism around the world. Both countries share the dubious honor of experiencing Islamic extremism within their borders. The formation of a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism to develop strategies and exchange information on terrorism, developed prior to the eleventh of September, illustrate pre-existing common concerns for New Delhi and Washington. The Joint Working Group was intended to enhance the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation to counter terrorism between India and the United States. This cooperation included sharing experiences, exchanging information, and coordinating approaches and actions against terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking. The current war on terrorism has ramifications for both countries' future internal peace and well-being, and therefore a stake in seeing its successful conclusion.

The Indian Ocean has grown in importance for both countries. India and the United States have mounting energy needs. Presently, the United States imports 50 percent of its oil from the Middle East and India imports almost 90 percent of its requirements from the same region.<sup>90</sup> This means the Persian Gulf and the sea-lanes of communications (SLOC) through the Indian Ocean remain

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<sup>90</sup> Blackwell.

critical security concerns for both countries in the long-term. The United States remains India's largest trade partner, with 90 percent of imports to India coming by way of sea transports.<sup>91</sup> Accordingly, the area remains economical important to both countries. With two-thirds of all trade in the United States economy relying on Asia, security and piracy concerns in the SLOCs of the India Ocean and the Straits of Malaaca remain vital interests.

Finally, the growing number of United Nations PKOs remains a strategic issue for the United States. Currently, there are fifteen active PKOs around the world, as compared to only eight active PKOs in 1991.<sup>92</sup> The current instability in regions around the world demonstrates a continued, if not increasing, role for various types of missions. India is one of the top five contributors of military forces for PKOs in the world. With domestic political resistance for supplying American forces to the United Nations, friendly ties with nations that actively support the United Nations with troops remains a critical goal for the United States.

Clearly, there is an enough of common ground for the United States and India to work with in the short- and long-term. There is also a need for both countries to embark on a mutually supported and sustained relationship to work together in these areas. This common ground supports the argument for a more committed and dedicated engagement between the United States and India. Why

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<sup>91</sup> Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, "FY 2001 Country Commercial Guide: India," *Department of State Online* [home page on-line]; available from [http://www.state.gov/www/about\\_state/business/com\\_guides/2001/sa/index.html](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/com_guides/2001/sa/index.html); Internet; accessed 8 September 2001.

<sup>92</sup> U.N. Department of Public Information, "U.N. Peacekeeping Operations," *United Nations Online* [home page on-line]; available at <http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/dpko/ops.htm>; Internet; accessed 24 October 2001.

it serves in the interests of both governments to pursue this partnership is addressed in the following sections.

### **DIPLOMATIC GAINS**

The previous examples of the importance of Asia for the economy of the United States and the region's problematic security challenges underscores the importance of the United States to maintain good relations with all countries of the region. India is the only post-colonial nation of any significance to successfully maintain a secular democracy. The nonalignment movement it began in the 1950s, albeit a failed concept, gives New Delhi some access and influence in the developing world and non-Western communities. A sustained commitment and friendly relations with New Delhi could increase the diplomatic respect and access of the United States in the region. A friendly India sensitive to American concerns in Asia is an opportunity to ensure the interests of the United States are better served.

The United States war on terrorism requires sustained commitments by coalition partners to ensure its future success as the dynamics of the war change. India is devoted in several areas to this struggle. The United States and India are both signatories on the International Convention for Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism since January 2000. This convention is an important international document in the war on terrorism and a vital instrument in severing the financial ties to terrorist organizations. Having India's influence in the developing world working for sustained pressure on the terrorist's financial network serves the interests of both countries.

The Joint Working Group is an organization without precedence in Indo-United States relations. The counter terrorism aspect of the group allows New Delhi and Washington an opportunity to “chalk out future cooperation, training, sharing of experience and perhaps even exchange of intelligence.”<sup>93</sup> As part of this group, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Bureau of Investigation are establishing offices in New Delhi and Washington, respectively. This level of cooperation and its efficiency will continue if positive relations and trust are built through sustained diplomatic cooperation.

Pursuit of a dedicated and continuous partnership through diplomatic ties will ensure the future success in all of these areas. In addition, the United States can assist India in two primary areas. First, reinforcing and promoting of India’s status and its role in international affairs beyond South Asia will validate India’s ambition as a great power. Second, increased diplomatic ties with India will build confidence and trust between both nations. Confidence building measures will open negotiation channels for the United States and India and allow more favorable trade and commerce agreements. These measures will have positive consequences in improving economic ties.

### **ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENTS**

India’s growing middle class and developing economy remains a relatively untapped market for goods and services of the United States. If India is able to continue its economic transition, it will become more attractive to businesses and investors in the United States. The best opportunity for this is in

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<sup>93</sup> Lieutenant General R.K. Jasbir Singh, ed., “India’s Diplomatic Offensive Against Terrorism,” *Indian Defence Yearbook 2001* (New Delhi: Natraj Publishers, 2001), 75.

India's growing information technology (IT) market, which last year generated US \$4 billion in trade. The Indian government wants to expand this to US \$50 billion by the year 2008.<sup>94</sup> Opening IT markets in the fast growing mobile phone sector will benefit both countries. Presently, mobile phones are not manufactured domestically. It is estimated that one-third to one-half of all mobile phone sets are purchased on the black market.<sup>95</sup> This undercuts Indian government tax revenues and revenues for legitimate businesses. Opening this sector to legal imports and foreign direct investments (FDI) by American companies for domestic manufacturing will assist the Indian government in reaching its 2008 IT goal and generate positive growth, jobs and government revenue to fund other development areas.

The latest advance for American companies is the customer service representative business in India. These companies rely on high-capacity digital phone networks. Increased government revenues in other sectors, for example IT, will allow the Indian government and Indian businesses to develop more high-capacity digital phone lines. This increased capability will allow Indian companies to expand into this growing market. The McKinsey Global Institute expects these services to provide about 800,000 jobs and generate an estimated US \$17 billion in revenue this year alone.<sup>96</sup> The job as a customer service representative requires skilled, educated, and English-speaking workers. This will

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<sup>94</sup> Dana R. Dillion, "Time for Expanded Trade Relations with India," *The Heritage Foundation Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.heritage.org/library/execmemo/em733.html>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 2001.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

provide needed jobs for a growing and educated middle class in India. This group will also provide a low-cost employment option for American companies wanting to expand into India.<sup>97</sup>

The present recession in the United States requires new markets for exports, trade, and investments for continued growth. The two previous paragraphs illustrate just a few examples of where that growth could occur and the long-term opportunities that exist in the Indian marketplace. However, several obstacles exist in India that currently restrict these opportunities. Currently, investments are starting to leave India for China because of increasing problems with the Indian bureaucracy.<sup>98</sup> A sustained dialogue and continued goodwill can build confidence in the Indian government to remove some of these obstacles. Increasing business-to-business ties between the two countries can inspire Indian companies to add political pressure on New Delhi to lower tariffs and open its market for investments. Indian business leaders are already beginning to pressure New Delhi for quicker changes in economic policies.<sup>99</sup> These free market reforms will benefit the Indian government with increased economic growth to sustain a growing population and help fund infrastructure development, an increasing military budget, and other government projects.

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<sup>97</sup> Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, "FY 2001 Country Commercial Guide: India."

<sup>98</sup> BBC Business News, "McKinsey Tells India to 'Try Harder,'" *BBC Online* [home page on-line]; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid\\_1530000/1530163.htm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid_1530000/1530163.htm); Internet; accessed 1 September 2001.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., "India Worries Over Stagnant Growth," *BBC Online* [home page on-line]; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid\\_1535000/1535254.htm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid_1535000/1535254.htm); Internet; accessed 10 September 2001.

Although China is more developed, has a gross domestic product almost double of India, and at the present time is a more attractive investment, India today is where China was in the 1980s.<sup>100</sup> Unlike China, India seems a safer investment for American businesses in the future. India possesses the same low-cost and abundant work force, but a work force in a safer political environment. The educated class in India is English-speaking and the business culture is more westernized than China.<sup>101</sup> If reform continues, the emerging India will be an economic factor in ten to twenty years. This offers a growing economy with good future growth potential for American investors and venture capitalists. These economic opportunities for India and the United States offer more compelling reasons why the two governments need to start building an economic partnership today for greater monetary benefits and growth in the next decade.

### **MILITARY COOPERATION**

The changing military strategy of the United States is placing more emphasis on regional capabilities. Therefore regional security cooperation with allies and friends is increasingly important.<sup>102</sup> The primary goal of the cooperation is to assist these friends to create a favorable balance of power in vital areas of the world to deter aggression and coercion by unfriendly nations.<sup>103</sup> The events last September also demonstrate that terrorists have the means and enthusiasm to commit catastrophic terrorism against American citizens,

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<sup>100</sup> Victor M. Gobarev, "India as a World Power: Changing Washington's Myopic Policy," *Cato Institute Policy Analysis*, no. 381 (2000): 7.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>102</sup> *Quadrennial Defense Review*, 20.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

infrastructure, and territory. Furthermore, previous policies of only economic and diplomatic pressure to thwart the state-sponsorship of terrorist organizations do not work.<sup>104</sup>

To this end, the United States military expects to maintain a strong presence in the Persian Gulf and East Asia. With Operation Enduring Freedom ongoing in Afghanistan, the problem for military planners remains power projection and sustaining the force in the Indian Ocean region. This problem highlights the present weakness in the Pentagon's goal for increased regional capabilities and the importance of future cooperation with friendly militaries in the Indian Ocean region. India is the logical choice for this military cooperation.

The Indian military is the major regional power in the Indian Ocean region, professional, and under civilian control. All three are important aspects for military ties with the United States. The centerpiece for this cooperation is the naval forces of India and United States. The primary means of support are port visits, refueling and resupply operations, security of the Indian Ocean SLOCs, and naval protection of commercial entities against piracy in the Indian Ocean littoral region. There already exists economic, political, and strategic common interest for both countries to maintain free and open SLOCs in the Indian Ocean. Positive and productive diplomatic and economic relations between the governments of India and the United States will enhance current military-to-military relations.

There also exist common military interests if China becomes threatening or expansive in nature. The primary focus of the Chinese military modernization

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 5.

program is the navy. Under a 1993 agreement with the Russians, the Chinese are purchasing advanced naval vessels and missile systems that are designed to destroy American aircraft carriers.<sup>105</sup> This poses a common threat to the navies of India and the United States. The modern vessels of the Chinese Navy also give it increased range beyond the South China Seas and into the Indian Ocean Theater.<sup>106</sup> Another disturbing development that threatens Indian interest in the India Ocean is the upgrading of commercial harbors and naval facilities in Myanmar by the Chinese government. Although the majority of development is strictly for commercial use, the perception of modernized ports in Myanmar funded by the Chinese raises the concern of Indian strategic planners.<sup>107</sup>

Increased friendship and cooperation between the naval forces of India and the United States and increased presence of the U.S. Navy in the Indian Ocean have two immediate benefits for both countries. First, it allows the Pentagon to deploy a more sustainable force in the region with Indian naval and port support. Second, the increased American presence will offset the advances of the Chinese Navy, which benefits India. If the naval presence of the United States is reduced, then the competition between the Indian and Chinese navies will inevitably increase, and the Indian government may be forced into a naval competition it is fiscally unprepared to undertake.

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<sup>105</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 284.

<sup>106</sup> Ninan Koshy, "Looking from India at the Spy Plane," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (2001), 2. Also available on-line at <http://www.fpif.org/commentary/0105india.html>.

<sup>107</sup> Garver, 292.

Another benefit of continued military cooperation is an advantage in the political realm. The Congress and Pentagon have an aversion to committing American forces for operations in support of the United Nations. Building military ties with friendly nations that support PKOs with troops is a primary goal of regional commanders for the United States. The establishment of peacekeeping training facilities and schools is encouraged and funded by the Department of Defense. Two peacekeeping schools already exist in South Asia, in Bangladesh and Nepal, and supported by the United States. The Indian Armed Forces are currently one of the top five suppliers of troops for United Nations missions. Table 1 displays the country total of the top five contributors for military and police forces in support of operations for the United Nations.

Table 1. Average Monthly Troop Contributions to United Nations Operations<sup>108</sup>

Country	Observers	Police	Military	Country Total
1. Bangladesh	55	186	5,265	5,506
2. Nigeria	37	122	3,307	3,466
3. Pakistan	61	387	2,934	2,842
4. Jordan	43	794	1,854	2,691
5. India	29	631	1,702	2,362

These operations are beneficial for both countries. For India, participation adds international prestige and increased global awareness of India's commitment to the international community. It also generates income for the Indian

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<sup>108</sup> These averages are for the months of January 2001 to October 2001. Compiled from U.N Department of Public Information, "Contributors to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," *United Nations Online* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.un.org/dpko/dpko/contributors/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 10 November 2001.

government and provides a unique opportunity for the Indian military to train with military forces from around the world. For the United States, it assists Washington by involving the world body to provide peacekeepers while preventing the misperception of American hegemony in world affairs. It also benefits the United States domestically with reduced involvement of military forces, thus freeing them to participate in other actions directed by the President.

## **SUMMARY**

Building a strategic partnership with India cannot take place overnight. The trust and confidence that is needed will take years of work. What is required is sustained political dialogue, continued military cooperation, and improved trade and investment for many years before either country can label the relationship as a partnership. Only through a deliberate and systematic discourse can the relationship advance to a mutually beneficial level.

The United States should not pursue India in an attempt to isolate or contain China. This type of relationship has a disastrous history for the United States. If the United States opts for this tactic, it runs the risk of encouraging Chinese nationalism and portraying itself as a hegemonic power in Asia. Neither situation is advantageous for the United States and its Asian policy. Although China might have the potential to dominate Asia, currently it cannot. If China is able to control internal discord as it modernizes, if it is able to solve the social and environmental challenges before it, and if it can sustain its economic growth, then China will be a major regional power and enhance its capability to frustrate the regional interests of the United States in the near future.

On the other hand, India holds as much promise for success as China. It possesses great economic potential, a growing middle class, and a renowned scientific community.<sup>109</sup> Unlike China, India is a representative democracy with a fiercely independent judiciary, a self-regulating press, and freedom of religious expression that makes it a more attractive regional partner than China. The United States holds many advantages for India. With India's changing strategic outlook, growing population and unemployment, emerging nuclear force, and modernizing military, New Delhi is in need of money and must also increase economic growth to sustain its ambitions. The present economic strategy for India is not aggressive enough. Liberalization and privatization needs to continue. The United States can help with trade and foreign investment, if India is willing to accept it. American businesses are looking for the next global economic windfall and India has many potentially attractive features for such an event.

The benefits of a partnership are clear. Diplomatically, the United States gains indirect influence to some nations typically hostile to the West. India in return gets the international recognition it desires. It also would receive tangible benefits, such as increased investments, greater access to American markets, and civilian and military technology transfers. Militarily, the defense and common interests in the Indian Ocean are very important. The United States desperately needs friendly ports in the Indian Ocean to sustain its forces should the need arise. India sits in the heart of this vital region, and as a democracy, make a rational

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<sup>109</sup> Kennedy, 189.

choice for a military ally. Furthermore, the continued war on terrorism will require sustained support from friendly nations like India with its diplomatic influence and credibility, intelligence, and military support structures.

## **Chapter 5: Policy Implications**

The history of relations between the United States and India is replete with misperceptions, misguided principles, and missed opportunities. For over fifty years, India has occupied a semi permanent position on the periphery of American foreign policy. After the Indian nuclear tests of 1998 in general, and the Kargil war in 1999 in particular, perceptions are changing between both nations. Recently, the governments appear ready to dramatically change the status quo of troubled relations. This situation presents a unique opportunity to align both great democracies to achieve mutually supported goals.

The common ground necessary to build a partnership between India and the United States and the benefits of that partnership are clearer. To reach the final end state of a strategic partnership, however, long-term policy objectives are needed to stay the course and produce the desired results. The following paragraphs state some policy recommendations for the United States. These recommendations are not all-inclusive or a means to the end. On the contrary, they are suggestions that when applied across the spectrum of foreign policy, could produce a positive and productive relationship.

### **DIPLOMATIC POLICY**

#### **Nuclear Weapons**

Previously, the most controversial issue in the relationship with India was its nuclear status. It is obvious from press reports and speeches that the Bush administration is not concerned about nuclear weapons in India. One of the first

speeches in New Delhi by Ambassador Blackwell did not criticize the Indian nuclear program or mentioned the NPT. By all indications, the Bush administration has little concern about India's nuclear weapons.<sup>110</sup> Should the United States formally accept India's nuclear status? The short answer is not exactly.

India, by definition of the NPT, cannot be an official nuclear power because it tested after 1967. However, this should not stop the United States from formulating an exception to the rule, with appropriate conditions. The wording of the document needs to specifically cite the defensive nature of the Indian program, the stable form of government, and the limited scope of the program. The intent is to portray India as a responsible exception. The United States should not abandon its position on nuclear non-proliferation, but maintain the regime. However, the United States should not treat India as a rogue nation, India is not an Iraq or North Korea.

A unilateral acceptance of India's nuclear status is nothing short of accepting the inevitable. India shows no signs of discontinuing its nuclear program or its development of ballistic missiles for the foreseeable future. An official acceptance creates further goodwill between the countries. It also allows the opportunity for limited oversight of the Indian program. This oversight is achieved through nuclear scientist exchanges, technology transfers to improve security on nuclear materials, and continued bilateral discussions on nuclear energy and nuclear weapons.

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<sup>110</sup> Dugger, "U.S. Envoy Extols India Accepting its Atom Status," *The New York Times*, 7 September 2001.

## Kashmir

The insurgency in Kashmir remains a complicated and deeply engrained problem for India and Pakistan. As argued by American scholar Sumit Ganguly, the insurgency began as a result of growing political mobilization by Kashmiri youth coupled with the institutional decay of civic nationalism in Kashmir.<sup>111</sup> In other words, Kashmir demonstrates both the success and failure of Indian democracy. India's distributive policies brought political mobilization, primarily in respect to India's education policy and free press. Thus, expanded literacy and education created a generation more aware of the social and political aspects not just at the local level, but also at the national level as well.<sup>112</sup>

The United States cannot continue a silent role on Kashmir. Kashmir, for all practical purposes, is at its structural limit and requires third party intervention to achieve more productive results. The central argument of the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir is unchanged since 1947. Both sides remain diametrically opposed on the issues, the outcome, and the methods to resolve the conflict. In the words of Stephen Cohen, "no one [Indians or Pakistanis] is looking beyond the immediate events and short-term calculations of gain and pain."<sup>113</sup> Although the United States currently treats Kashmir as a bilateral dispute, the demonstration of India and Pakistan's nuclear capabilities in 1998 changed the strategic relevance of Kashmir. Given the crisis-prone nature of Indo-Pakistani relations,

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<sup>111</sup> Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997), 21.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, "Kashmir: The Roads Ahead," in *South Asia Approaches the Millennium: Reexamining National Security*, ed. Marvin G. Weinbaum and Chetan Kumar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 135.

the introduction of nuclear weapons promotes Kashmir to a potential catalyst for nuclear war in South Asia.<sup>114</sup>

The Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir affects the stability of the region similar to how the Israeli-Palestine conflict affects the Middle East. The United States has a diplomatic role to play in both disputes, and vital interests in maintaining regional stability. Using its growing friendship with New Delhi and its diplomatic influence in Islamabad, Washington needs to pressure the two sides to renew bilateral talks. The success of this policy is questionable as India is historically opposed to outside intervention or pressure on the Kashmir issue.

A possible solution is the United States initiating talks on nuclear issues in South Asia. This allows the United States to maintain an open and public dialogue with India and Pakistan. American diplomats could then use this public debate to promote bilateral talks between India and Pakistan. The purpose of these bilateral talks, from the perspective of the United States, is not to focus on the Kashmir issue. Instead, Washington should encourage Indo-Pakistani talks on nuclear no-first use policies, a missile launch notification treaty, and establishing a hotline between the heads of state, to name but a few. These accords all lie within the nuclear weapons realm, an area that India and Pakistan should recognize as an acceptable spot for American intrusion.

The purpose of this policy is to have India and Pakistan develop high and low-level diplomatic talks with set goals that are not focused on Kashmir. These

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<sup>114</sup> For an insightful analysis on Kashmir and nuclear weapons in South Asia, see Sumit Ganguly, "Beyond the Nuclear Dimension: Forging Stability in South Asia," in *Arms Control Today* 31, no 10 (2001): 3-7.

proposed talks would develop an ongoing dialogue between the two adversaries that could produce win-win policies and treaties for both countries. These policies would be important first steps in confidence building measures between India and Pakistan. If the United States can get India and Pakistan to meet and discuss issues with international ramifications beyond Kashmir, this could be a significant step in establishing a norm for continued Indo-Pakistani dialogues.

### **Other Diplomatic Issues**

The United States needs to continue engaging India on issues beyond South Asia. The Bush administration's decision to include New Delhi in briefings on his BMD policy is one example. These diplomatic moves demonstrate to New Delhi that Washington is willing to separate India from Pakistan. It also provides India with a boost in its self-esteem as a great power playing a more important role in international events. It is another step in building trust and confidence between the two countries.

The Joint Working Group needs to continue. Regularly scheduled meetings are a requirement. The forum, which this group convenes in, is relevant and essential to current events in Afghanistan and the immediate vicinity. This Working Group is critical to building trust and confidence between each country.

### **ECONOMIC POLICY**

Economics needs to be the cornerstone of relations for the United States and India to ensure a long-term partnership. It is easy to be pessimistic about the Indian economy when compared with China or other nations in the Pacific Rim. On the other hand, when compared to the India of ten years ago, it is making great

strides in its economy. The potential for a more open market is good, if the right policies are pursued. For instance, in August of this year, talk in the United States to lift the sanctions against India caused the Indian government to open part of its defense industry to foreign investment.<sup>115</sup>

### **Opening Markets**

The McKinsey Report states India growth is restricted by less than one-half percent by labor laws and poor infrastructure.<sup>116</sup> The previous administration focused on labor laws and worked through the World Trade Organization (WTO) to settle disputes and disagreements. It would better serve the United States to pursue bilateral trade talks directly with the Indian government and bypass the quagmire of the WTO. The Vajpayee government is expressing the desire to increase economic growth, reduce tariffs, and encourage investments from American companies. Direct bilateral talks would be the most expedient method to help encourage that growth and assist India's transition to a free-market economy.

A continued open dialogue and exchange between businesses can be productive. Recently, Indian businesses are pressuring the Indian government to increase liberalization to spark quicker growth.<sup>117</sup> The United States can influence these groups through continued meetings and talks with organizations in India, for example the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce.

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<sup>115</sup> Khozem Merchant, "Indian Defence Sector Set for Investment Boost," *The Financial Times*, 24 September 2001.

<sup>116</sup> McKinsey, 1.

<sup>117</sup> BBC News, "India Worries Over Stagnate Growth," *BBC Online* [home page on-line]; available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid\\_1546000/15463153.htm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/business/newsid_1546000/15463153.htm); Internet; accessed on 10 September 2001.

### **Bilateral Investment Treaty**

India has shown in trade agreements with other nations it is not resistant to bilateral talks. A primary policy focus for the United States should be on negotiating a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with New Delhi. The BIT is an instrument used by the government to protect American investors from unfair business practices overseas.<sup>118</sup> Consequently, a BIT encourages American business investments because of the increased guarantees it provides, a scenario that is beneficial to both countries. Presently, the largest obstacle preventing a BIT to pass with India is New Delhi's reluctance to sign a WTO document that protects international copyrights. Negotiations are on going in the WTO.

The United States should open a second track of negotiations to establish a bilateral trade agreement outside the WTO. Bypassing the multiple layers of the WTO will keep the negotiations focused on bilateral concerns. It may also give the Indian government the latitude it wants to reach a fair settlement to lower tariffs and foreign investment restrictions.

### **MILITARY POLICY**

#### **Increasing Cooperation**

The recent war in Afghanistan is accelerating military cooperation between the United States and India. The presence of three to four aircraft carrier battle groups in the Arabian Sea creates a large supply challenge. Currently, the Indian navy is supplying fuel and supplies at its ports for U.S. Navy vessels,

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<sup>118</sup> Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, "U.S. Bilateral Investment Treaty Program," *U.S. Department of State* [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.state.gov/www/issues/economic/7treaty.htm>; Internet; accessed on 10 October 2001.

including the Seventh Fleet. India is also offering the United States basing rights for aircraft and staging areas to launch ground forces. Although Indian forces are not directly involved with the current war in Afghanistan, this policy could change when the United States shifts its war to another theater. One potential area is Kashmir. Kashmir is home to a State Department designated terrorist organization, the Harkat-ul Mujahideen, which is associated with Al-Qaeda.

The United States needs to expand its military-to-military cooperation with India. Since the Indian Ocean is a strategically vital region to the United States, naval cooperation should be the focal point of future cooperation. The primary goal of this cooperation is keeping the SLOCs open and protecting commercial vessels from piracy. Other areas of future collaboration are joint air force operations, special operations training, and peacekeeping operations training with the United States and other regional militaries.

Lastly, the Bush administration should reinstate the Defense Policy Group with India. The Defense Policy Group is a bilateral organization created to allow defense officials from both countries a forum for discussions and negotiations. The scheduled meetings have been postponed since the Indian nuclear tests in 1998. These talks can span a wide variety of subjects from military exercises to military sales. In addition, the group is able to discuss tactics and techniques in protecting the Indian Ocean and the transfer of advanced military technologies. Resumption of talks will further enhance military cooperation between the United States and India.

## **Military Training**

The area of officer exchanges is almost non-existent between the United States and India. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program is presently very weak between the two governments. Last year only eleven Indian officers participated in the program. Compared to eighty-nine for Bangladesh and over one hundred for Sri Lanka.<sup>119</sup>

The IMET program sends foreign officers to military staff colleges and schools throughout the United States. This is an opportunity for the United States military to instruct foreign officers on military law, medical training, logistics and maintenance, and doctrine of United States. It also is an opportunity to expose foreign officers to the American lifestyle. This is an effective tool to breakdown common stereotypes of the United States, build mutual respect between the officer corps, and establish friendships and contacts. These courses, by design, make the officers better equipped for peacekeeping operations with the United Nations or joint military operations with the United States, a mutual benefit to both militaries.

## **CONCLUSION**

For the United States and India to maintain a serious partnership, the two nations must commit to a continuous dialogue based on mutual concerns with economics as a central role. As an emerging market place, India possesses

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<sup>119</sup> U.S. Department of Defense and Department of State, "Foreign Military Training and the Department of Defense Engagement Activities of Interest, Volume 1," U.S. Department of State [homepage on-line]; available at [http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/fmtrain/fpo\\_sasia\\_all.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/fmtrain/fpo_sasia_all.html); Internet; accessed 8 November 2001.

several areas of untapped frontiers for business investments and trade. The oft spoken of Indian middle class, even at a conservative number of 100 million, is almost one-half of the total population of the United States. The economic potential of this market for American businesses cannot be denied.

The United States is in a position to take advantage of these opportunities. First, both governments share a mutual friendship and a willingness to cooperate. Second, the United States is already India's largest trading partner and can negotiate from a position of power for further investment or import advantages over other competitors. Regardless, American businesses stand to benefit from any growth or increase in the Indian market as the country continues to liberalize.

For India, increased trade and foreign investments will have a similar impact on its economy. Increases in economic growth as a result of further trade and investment will have a compounding effect on the confidence of the Indian government. Increased profits and tax revenues will lead to domestic investments and job creation. Higher revenues will also create industry modernization and growth, which historically leads to urbanization and slower birth rates. As the United States and India increase friendly relations and build upon a partnership, differences of opinion and disagreements will occur. Stronger economic ties with India will help to temper any discord between the two nations, especially diplomatic friction. Political trust and understanding will improve with economic growth. The compounding effects could make dramatic changes in the Indian economy over the next ten years.

Military ties and cooperation are also a critical area in a future partnership with India. The lack of bases and friendly ports between the Pacific Rim and the Middle East negatively impacts on the Pentagon's ability to sustain forces in the Indian Ocean. The recent decision by the United States to shift some of its stored combat equipment from Europe to the Indian Ocean underscores the growing importance of the region. Further cooperation is anticipated with increased naval operations, training exercises, and the sell of defense equipment and technology.

The United States and India share several common areas of interest and long-term strategic goals. Both nations desire closer relations, both are suspicious of an emerging China, and both are committed to reducing the global effect of Islamic fundamentalism. Even economic aspirations are much the same. India desires increased growth and revenue to fund its growing domestic policies. The American government is looking to expand into future markets to sustain its growth. The historic problem with relations between the United States and India is it never lasts. Perhaps previously, there did not exist enough long-term common goals to sustain the relationship or universal security concerns requiring cooperation. The current governments in Washington and New Delhi seem willing to find this common ground. A commitment to maintain constructive diplomatic ties, continued military cooperation, and improved economic exchanges may be the catalyst that finally brings the United States and India together.

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## **Vita**

Kent Allen Breedlove was born in Mesa, Arizona on April 1, 1966, the son of Patricia Ann Breedlove and Steven Eugene Breedlove. After completing his work at Plano East Senior High School, Plano, Texas in 1984, he entered the University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas. During the fall of 1986, he entered Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. He received the degree of Bachelor of Science from Arizona State in August 1990. In that same month, he received his United States Army Commission as a Second Lieutenant of Armor and was designated a Distinguished Military Graduate. During the following years he served on Active Duty with the United States Army in various postings. He is a graduate of the Bangladesh Defense Services Command and Staff College, the United States Army Combined Arms Staff School, the Armor Officer Basic and Advance Courses, the United States Army Jungle Warfare School, the United States Army Airborne School, and the United States Army Ranger School. He received the degree of Master in Defense Studies from The National University in Gazipur, Bangladesh in May 2000. In September 2000, he entered The Graduate School at The University of Texas.

Permanent address: 1054 Blasingame Road

Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

This dissertation was typed by the author.